



Montana Department  
of Natural Resources  
and Conservation

## FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Serving Montana's Communities  
Since 1974



Sun River – photo by Mark Boesch

# HIGHGROUND

September 2008

This newsletter and other state floodplain management activities  
are funded, in part through grants from FEMA.

### State of Montana

## Map Modernization Program Update

Greetings readers! There is a lot of activity taking place with the Map Modernization program at this time. The program website [www.montanadfirms.com](http://www.montanadfirms.com) is in the process of being improved and updated; look for changes in September. Furthermore, the State of Montana is working diligently with FEMA, the State's sub-contractor PBS&J, and local communities to complete the

preliminary DFIRM is released, I have created a handout titled "Quick Reference: FEMA and the State of Montana DFIRM Adoption Procedures." This handout and FEMA's adoption guide: "Adoption of Flood Insurance Rate Maps by Participating Communities" (FEMA Pub. 495, September 2005), will be available online in late September when the Montana Map

Jurisdiction	Estimated Preliminary DFIRM Release Date	Estimated Effective Date for DFIRM & Associated Flood Report
Lewis and Clark County	September 2008	October 2009
Custer County	September 2008	November 2009
Missoula County	October 2008	December 2009
Gallatin County	October 2008	December 2009
Fergus County	February 2009	April 2010
Yellowstone County	April 2009	June 2010
Cascade County	June 2009	August 2010
Park County	To Be Determined*	To Be Determined*
Carbon County	To Be Determined*	To Be Determined*

*\*The schedules for these projects are in the process of being revised.*

existing DFIRM conversion projects. The table above shows the estimated preliminary (draft) DFIRM release dates and estimated DFIRM effective dates for the communities that have ongoing DFIRM projects at this time (*these dates are subject to change, communities will be made aware if dates require adjustment*).

The preliminary DFIRM release dates are fast approaching for a number of communities. In anticipation of questions from communities, regarding what happens after a

Modernization Program website update is complete. Electronic or hard copies can currently be obtained by contacting me at (406) 444-6656 or [cadair@mt.gov](mailto:cadair@mt.gov) or by contacting Mary Guokas, Map Modernization Outreach Specialist at (406) 444-1343 or [mguokas@mt.gov](mailto:mguokas@mt.gov).

One final note: a number of communities went through the scoping process for potential Map Modernization DFIRM conversion projects in this past year. Scoping reports were compiled for each of

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*continued from Map Modernization Program Update*



Celinda Adair, Map Modernization Program Manager

these communities and submitted to FEMA. In September, I will be sending out electronic copies of these scoping reports to the appropriate communities. Funds for new projects were somewhat limited this year and not all of the potential DFIRM conversion projects previously scoped will receive funding during the upcoming Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) October, 2008-September 2009. FEMA will finalize project funding decisions by the end of September. Communities will be contacted regarding funding information when final awards have been made. The State of Montana is committed to working with communities to map and

identify flood hazards. I would like to commend the many independent efforts being undertaken by communities to apply for grants and/or directly fund new mapping activities.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any of the topics mentioned here or any other issues relating to the Map Modernization Program for the State of Montana or flood hazard mapping activities.

Thank you,

Celinda Adair, Map Modernization Program Manager  
State of Montana DNRC

## FEMA Grants: Apply Now to December 1st

From an edited June 19th email sent by Kent Atwood.

With a certain amount of pleasant surprise I'd like to call your attention to the following link:  
<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=3309> I suggest you download it to your hard drive.

This is the 2009 grant guidance for FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDMC), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), Repetitive Flood Claims (RFC) and Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) grant programs all rolled into one. There is a large amount of information but don't be intimidated by the size. You should review sections 1 through 3.3 and ignore section 3.4; Montana has no Severe Repetitive Loss properties.

**THE GRANT APPLICATION WINDOW IS OPEN NOW**, the release date was June 19, 2008. Any pre-award expenses you may incur that are not federally funded in some other way should be documented and used toward your local match as required.

The application period is June 19, 2008 to December 19, 2008. **All PDMC applications will need to be delivered to me as e-grants**

**in a smooth finished form by close of business on 1 December 2008 (State Deadline)** so I have time to screen them, ensure all your attachments will upload into e-Grants, QA them, rank them via an objective board and have FEMA Region VIII look them over informally to provide suggestions on how to improve them as well as to increase their chances of selection. I hope to see them sooner and more frequently so I may aid you in the application construction and content.

Many local PDM Plans are approaching their five year expiration date. I encourage you to begin a planning grant application to get at least 75% funding to update your plan. I encourage you to talk to your neighbors. Consider partnering with two or three counties/tribal nations in one PDM Plan Update application. Each of you will get your own unique and individual jurisdictional tailored plan, but economies of scale are better with two or three in one PDM Planning Grant application. I have also communicated with more than half a dozen jurisdictions and a tribal nation or two interested in submitting PDM project applications. After

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## Welcome Jordan, Montana to the NFIP

*Patience and perseverance by the Town of Jordan in completing requirements to join the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), now make it possible for the community to receive NFIP participation benefits. Montana now has 130 participating communities in the NFIP.*

*continued from FEMA Grants*

many years of complaints to FEMA, they finally listened to us. The grant application window opens early and remains open for six months. We are not crammed into 90 days at the end of the year, over the holiday season. I urge you to start now and work on it even 20-30 minutes a week. I will be available to help you and with a bit of scheduling luck, I will gladly come to your office at your request to enroll you in FEMA e-Grants and give you a crash course in these grant programs to get you started.

Please call me with any questions. My primary function as the State Hazard Mitigation Officer is to help you through this process in order to get you the grant to get a PDM Plan (or Updated Plan) or to get the 75% Federal grant funding to mitigate the natural hazards in your jurisdiction.

Sincerely,

Kent Atwood, CFM  
Hazard Mitigation Officer  
State of Montana  
406-841-3960

## Flood Photo Service

By Laurence Siroky



*Aerial photo of Bitterroot River in Missoula County May 20, 2008.*



*Laurence Siroky, ready to ride and shoot photos. Other passengers not shown, Laura Hendrix and Larry Schock.*

**View more photos through a link on our website:**

<http://mtfloodplain.mt.gov/>

Informative photographs were taken this spring of the flooding along the Bitterroot River from Missoula to above Darby, as well as the East Gallatin north of Bozeman. Floodplain administrators of Ravalli and Gallatin Counties found the photos to be useful records in administering their floodplain programs. These photos aid in floodplain permitting and in assessing floodplain maps for Montana DNRC or FEMA.

If sufficient funds and resources are available, the Montana DNRC will continue to capture aerial photographs: either through snap shots or linear aerial photography, documenting significant flood events. A call or request from a local floodplain administrator to Traci Sears will initiate the Montana DNRC effort.

Photos taken on May 20, 2008 on the Bitterroot River and East Gallatin River on May 25, 2008, are available on our web site: <http://mtfloodplain.mt.gov/>



## Public Outreach By Mary Guokas



*Panel Discussion from River Awareness Summit in Miles City, April 29th. From left to right: Greg Johnson, US Army Corps of Engineers; Mayor Joe Whalen, Don Youngbauer, Yellowstone River Conservation District Council; Laurence Siroky, Montana DNRC; Shandi Teltschik, FEMA Region VIII.*

A big thank you is owed to many individuals, agencies and organizations in this big state. From Missoula to Dodson, the importance of flood hazards, and floodplain management has been communicated to Montanans. Here is a sampling of public outreach efforts from around the state.

### On the Hi-Line

Marvin Cross, Montana DNRC Regional Engineer for the Havre Regional Office, arranged for the DNRC 3-panel traveling display to be at the following fairs: **Phillips County Fair in Dodson**, the **Havre-Hill County Fair**, and the **Blaine County Fair in Chinook**. Fortunately, Bob Larson, Regional Manager of the same office, was able to follow up on the fair participation. Marvin's health prohibited his involvement. (Keep on the road to recovery, Marvin!)

### Eastern Montana

The Mayor of **Miles City**, Joe Whalen, along with his active and energetic staff, including Steve Craddock and John Marks, have been educating the public in the Miles City area through many mediums, including regular newspaper articles. Request electronic versions of these "Letters to the Editor" by emailing [mguokas@mt.gov](mailto:mguokas@mt.gov)

[mt.gov](http://mt.gov) or [scraddock@miles-city-mt.org](mailto:scraddock@miles-city-mt.org). Informing the public about flood risks and an "in-progress" Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map has been a high priority for Miles City. An extensive multi-agency River Awareness Summit was held at the end of April. A huge thank you is extended to Miles Community College for their generosity in the use of their facilities. Also, the floodplain management program was represented for the second year in a row at the Eastern Montana Fair.

### Western Montana

The 100th Anniversary of the Clark Fork flood was initiated by **Missoula** County Floodplain Administrator, Todd Kietz. The Clark Fork's Watershed Education Program, Public Education and Communications Coordinator, Justin Ringsak, coordinated this multi-agency event held at the Clark Fork River Farmers Market. A floodplain management booth at the Western Montana Fair was made possible with support from the Association of Montana's Floodplain Managers (AMFM). Booth "setter-uppers" and staffers included: Todd Kietz, Floodplain Administrator for Missoula County and the City of Missoula; Larry Schock, Montana DNRC

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*Miles Community College served as an excellent facility and had room to accommodate a large audience.*



Todd Klietz, Floodplain Administrator for the City of Missoula and Missoula County, shows historic photos.

*continued from Public Outreach*

Regional Engineer; Laura Hendrix, Chair of the Association of AMFM; and Mary Guokas, Montana DNRC.

Participation of many agencies made Flood Awareness Day in **Livingston** a success. The City of Livingston sponsored the Civic Center. Piggy-backing on The Cooperation for the Northern Rockies, Farmers Market was a real asset. The list of supporters and agency participation is unfortunately too long for this article.

Representatives from a variety of agencies made the **Lewis and Clark County** Flood Awareness Day for 6th graders at East Valley Middle School a success. The event got a good start "out of the shoot" with an

energetic teacher and a coordinated planning team, lead by Chris Evans of the Lewis and Clark Conservation District.

For the 3rd year in a row, the Flathead County Planning & Zoning Office has hosted the Community Land Use Booth at the Northwestern Montana Fair in Kalispell. Representatives from the Cities of Kalispell and Whitefish also assisted in the booth throughout the fair. The booth was appropriately located next to the Flathead Conservation District and provided the entire community with an opportunity to discuss land use issues, including floodplains, with community planners and floodplain administrators.

## Joint Application Form Revised

The "Joint Application for Proposed Work in Streams, Lakes and Wetlands in Montana", commonly referred to as the "Joint Application" has been revised. Montana can be proud of the way agencies work together to produce a form and

instructions which saves citizens in the duplication of application information. Be up-to-date and use this revision. Here's the link: [http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/permits/streampermitting/joint\\_application.asp](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/permits/streampermitting/joint_application.asp)

## Free Streamside Help Presentations Offered to Communities

Submitted by Mary Vandebosch and Jeff Erickson

With residential development requests on the increase in Montana, a state task force is offering local officials, planning boards and others a chance to learn how streamside planning can help to conserve local values, protect private property, guard builders and local governments against lawsuits, and boost economies.

efforts to maintain the Montana lifestyle.

To schedule a presentation, call Mary Vandebosch or Jeff Erickson, Headwaters Policy and Planning Partnership at 406-449-3229, or email [headwaters@q.com](mailto:headwaters@q.com). Presentations will be available until the end of December, possibly longer. Act soon.

### New Billings Office Regional Engineer

Welcome Sam Johnson! Sam comes to the DNRC with over ten years engineering experience. He's worked for a variety of engineering firms. No need to tell him what LOMA (Letter of Map Amendment) stands for. He has completed LOMAs for former clients.

The presentation, sponsored by the Governor's Task Force for Riparian Protection, is aimed at helping local governments and businesses better understand the role and function of natural areas and floodplains. It also addresses legal responsibilities as communities attempt to balance development opportunities with

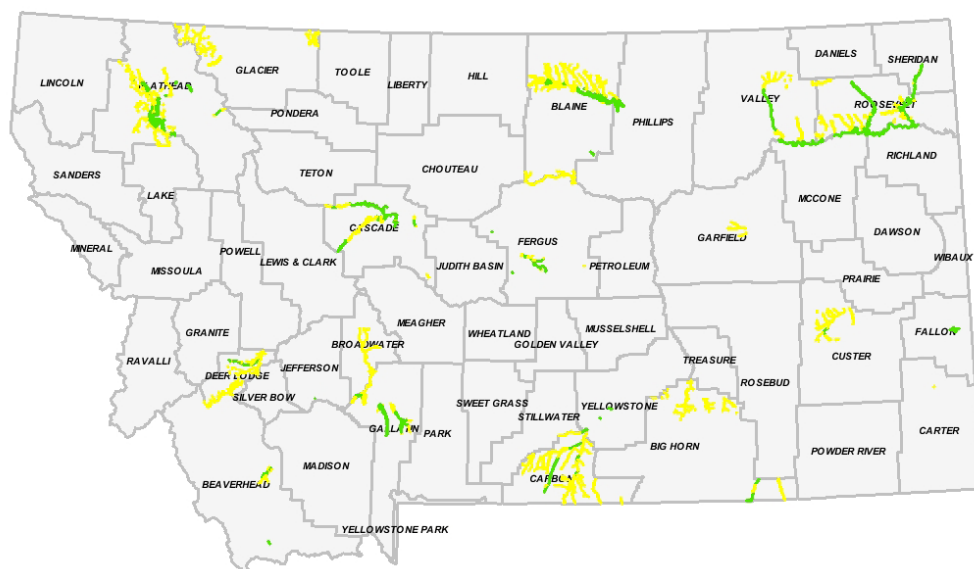
The Governor's Task Force for Riparian Protection is an interagency group convened to provide information about responsible development along Montana's riparian corridors. For more information, visit <http://water.montana.edu/setback>.



## How Much of Montana has Mapped Floodplains?

Answer: stay tuned, an answer may be available in a year. A flood map stream database is

Partially Completed Mapped Floodplains in Montana



### Legend

- Areas with Approximate Hydrologic Studies
- Areas with Detailed Hydrologic Studies

*Map of mapped floodplains to date. Map completion expected in September 2009.*

being produced by digitizing all the streams in Montana that have either an approximate or a detailed hydrologic study. The database will be in a shape file that can be used in ArcGIS. The shapefile can produce a visual representation of all the streams that have been studied. An ability to access the attributes for any stream will be possible. This state-wide data will help in identifying mapping needs and communicating information to state decision-makers. Chad Hill is championing this project from Helena. He's actually busy with dam safety projects, but 10% of his time is devoted to this special project. Chad is from Ogden Utah. He has a B.A. in Civil Engineering from Carroll College. After college Chad joined the Army as a Geospatial Analyst creating maps and terrain studies, using ArcGIS, for Commanders on the ground and pilots in the sky. He spent 12 months in Afghanistan and 15 months in Iraq. Back in the "states" he is enjoying running, biking, and kayaking. Fortunately, his wife shares interest in these pursuits.

## How to find a Letter of Map Change (LOMC) i.e. LOMR, LOMA

FEMA's Mapping Service Center website allows easy access to find LOMCs for your community. Visit <http://msc.fema.gov> and follow directions under "More Information", "How do I Find a LOMC".

## Training Opportunities

Traci Sears-Tull has been offering "unofficial" floodplain 101 training during her visits to communities.

Announcements for free upcoming floodplain 101 training classes will be sent via email.

### AMFM Conference Date Set



March 3-5th, 2009. Mark your calendars! The Association of Montana's Floodplain Managers (AMFM) annual conference will be held in Great Falls this year.

October 13-16, 2008	Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts (E282)
October 20-23, 2008	Managing the Flood Dev. Through NFIP Training the Trainer
November 3-6, 2008	Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts (E194)
December 15-18, 2008	EMI: Managing Floodplain Development Through the NFIP
February 2-5, 2009	Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts (E282)

The above national classes are offered at Emmitsburg, Maryland by FEMA. Airfare and tuition is paid by FEMA. For more information visit: <http://training.fema.gov/EMICourses/>

## Village Opted Out of Flood Insurance Plan

By Erin Richards

[erichards@journalsentinel.com](mailto:erichards@journalsentinel.com)

Posted: June 11, 2008

### **Dispute with FEMA led Lake Delton to refuse federally backed coverage**

#### **Where is Traci Sears?**

*The NFIP Coordinator for the state has been doing her job and visiting a near countless number of communities. She'll be catching her breathe and compiling her contribution for the next edition of Highground.*

#### **Article Addresses Legal Challenges in Floodplain Management**

*The Vermont Journal of Environmental Law has published an article by Edward A. Thomas and Sam Riley Dedlock entitled "Mitigating Misery: Land Use and Protection of Property Rights before the Next Big Flood". This article may be of special interest to those who attended the "No Adverse Impact" Conference held last March in Montana. Edward A. Thomas, Esq. was the keynote speaker. Access the article here: <http://www.vjel.org/journal/VJEL10063.html>*

**Lake Delton** - Residents and landowners affected by the Lake Delton breach spent Wednesday seeking an explanation for why the community opted out of a free national flood insurance program that 90% of the state's flood-prone communities have joined.

Anguish over the lack of insurance surfaced as members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency prepared to survey the damage in Sauk County and several other Wisconsin counties today.

The Village of Lake Delton began the paperwork just two weeks ago to rejoin the flood insurance program after a dispute with FEMA's floodplain elevation maps from 2001 caused it to back out. But because of that decision, residents such as Tim Fromm, Tom Pekar and Don Kubenik were not able to obtain flood insurance - which is backed by the federal government - for the homes they built on the shore of Lake Delton within the last few years.

Fromm's house worth more than \$1 million is gone, and Pekar and Kubenik lost substantial parts of their houses valued at close to or over \$1 million. Two other houses owned by the Wisconsin Land Co. also are gone; the company couldn't be reached.

"(The village) pretty much assured us that nothing would happen because of the dam," said Pekar, as he and his wife, Tina, salvaged the contents of their garage Wednesday. The back half of their house continued to dangle precariously over a newly scraped-out cliff. Fluffy white ceiling insulation blanketed the garage and driveway like a summer snow.

"Our insurance agent up here said we didn't need flood insurance as long as we built above the floodplain," Pekar said as he dumped out more

white fuzz from inside a green Wellington boot.

According to FEMA's maps from 2001, the homes and property that yielded to the lake water Monday were in the floodplain, said Bob Watson, a floodplain engineer with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Watson added that out of 500 communities that have been designated as prone to flooding in Wisconsin, about 450 of them have opted into the National Flood Insurance Program.

But Lake Delton Village Engineer John Langhans said the village didn't enroll with the program because FEMA's new maps in 2001 had "gross inaccuracies" when it came to the designated floodplain level.

The village had its engineering firm in 2002 establish what it believed to be the true 100-year flood elevation level - 833.93 feet above sea level - and then submitted that study to the DNR for approval.

The situation remained more or less unresolved until last year, when FEMA announced it would design new flood maps based on more accurate digital data from aerial photos and contour lines.

Lake Delton asked that its lake be mapped again as well with the more accurate surveying techniques, which the DNR and FEMA agreed to do as long as the village joined the flood insurance program, Watson said.

Whether that's what prompted Lake Delton to start the process of re-applying for the insurance program a few weeks ago is unclear, as Village President Frank Kaminski has refused to answer any questions about the village's involvement - or lack of involvement - in the issue.

"You're probably going to start seeing

*continued...*

## Best wishes for Mike Knutson and Dave Adair

Mike Knutson, the former State Floodplain Engineer, nabbed a dream job in Boise, Idaho working for the Bureau of Reclamation. Dave Adair, former Regional Engineer with the Montana DNRC Water Resources office in Billings, accepted another state position with the Department of Transportation in Billings. Their contributions to the state floodplain program were greatly appreciated. We trust their soon-to-be successors will continue in the tradition of grand contributions to the management of floodplains in Montana.

continued from Village Opted Out of Flood Insurance Plan

a lot of lawsuits” over all this, said Fromm, who has nothing left of his house other than a basketball hoop on a cliff and a small mound of landscaped shrubs. The video of his house tumbling into the new tributary of the Wisconsin River has become an iconic shot of the Lake Delton breach.

Like neighbors Pekar and Kubenik, Fromm is in touch with lawyers to handle issues such as whether the damage to their homes was caused by a flood or erosion, and how they can get assistance from local, state or federal resources.

Kubenik said Wednesday that he has concerns about whether the shoreline that held County Highway A and the homes was safe to build on to begin with.

“That’s all sand - that ain’t right,” Kubenik recalled saying when he pulled up to what was left of his vacation home and saw the topography of the breached area.

Meanwhile, the village has a variety of other woes, including business

owners on the lake who say they have been denied business interruption insurance from their agencies.

Village trustee and Tommy Bartlett Show proprietor Tom Diehl - who also said he’s been denied business interruption insurance - is begging tourists to keep their reservations this summer, and he said he’s in the process of launching a program that will give those who book rooms on Lake Delton half-off passes to area attractions.

“Please, please don’t cancel your reservations,” Diehl said. “Ninety percent of the Dells is still up and running.”

Watson, who has seen scenarios similar to this play out in different communities, offered a more sobering perspective on what Lake Delton and its businesses and residents are going through.

“We call it ‘the disaster after the disaster,’” he said.

*JSOnline Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

## Montana’s Floodplain Program Contact List

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